

Correspondence.

RESTORATION OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

SIR,—I am not fond of rushing into print, but will you allow me just a little corner to throw out a hint to the dean and chapter of Westminster Abbey.

There have lately appeared in *THE BUILDER* correspondents who have been trying to rake up every argument they could find in favour of the restoration of this venerable and sacred building. One thinks it ought to be done simply because it wants it. Another because of the splendid buildings rearing their heads all around it, and he fears the poor abbey will be left in the lurch. No wonder that such common-place arguments as these produce no effect.

Let the dean and chapter take the advice of one who, unlike them, has got to live by his wits, and let them repair the abbey, not for the reasons before stated, but only to increase the attractions of the show; and consequently the number of sixpences in their pockets. Let them follow the example of the proprietors of the Colosseum, and Covent Garden Theatre. Look how they have taken since being repaired and beautified. How much better prices these places have commanded since their restoration. If they have not the money in hand, they should start a company, and have it provisionally registered,—capital, say 20,000*l.* in 10*l.* shares, and follow up their advertisement with an analysis of the amount of "traffic returns" for the last ten years, showing how much their incomes had increased during the time. They might also profit by the suggestion of your correspondent of two weeks ago, viz., that of having a room built adjoining the abbey to place the monuments in; and follow the wake of Madame Tussaud by heading an advertisement something in this fashion:—"Westminster Abbey.—New room! Increased attraction! The dean and chapter beg to announce, &c. &c." They might very appropriately call it "*The Room of Horrors!*" Why, the wenterprising managers of St. Paul's know how to cater for the public better than they do, for the latter exhibition is being beautified.

Depend upon it, the dean and chapter's fortunes and fame would soon be made if they would only take the advice of, yours obediently,
P. M. R.

Ipswich, Sept. 13th, 1847.

WHO WROTE VITRUVIUS?

SIR,—Allow me to direct attention to the following extract from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1837, p. 522, in a notice of a meeting of the Institute of British Architects, on April 17th:—"A continuation of the correspondence between Schultz and Goethe was read, the subject being the authenticity of the work attributed to Vitruvius; the opinion of the writer was, that the work was a compilation commenced about 970, and finished in 978, by or under the auspices of Pope Sylvester II., in which is added the following note, by the editor:—"The literature of architecture would suffer but little by the establishment of this point. Vitruvius has often proved a blind leader to equally blind followers."

Rather severe this, but not more so than consistent with truth: more than the above on the same subject has been published, and more decisive in the result, but I cannot recollect the exact *locus in quo*.

As some justification of the criticism in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, let me put the question—To what extent are we indebted to Vitruvius for the Parthenon?—Ans. *Nil*—and, to come down a step or two or three hundred years, I will venture to assert we should have had a Salisbury Cathedral, although we had never been enlightened by the labours of a Vitruvius.—I am, Sir, &c.,
G.

Union-street, Borough.

TREATMENT OF SECOND-CLASS TRAVELLERS ON RAILWAYS.

MR. EDITOR,—Your remarks in *THE BUILDER* of last week on the abominable conduct of the officers and directors of the Brighton Railway Company in placing passengers in second-class carriages with insane persons, induce me to lay before you a similar occurrence on a railway which is considered to stand much higher than the Brighton—I mean the "Great Western."

I was returning to London from Gloucestershire, on Tuesday, the 21st inst., and at the Swindon station the passengers are transferred from the Gloucester carriages into those coming from Bristol, Exeter, &c.; here I, with another passenger, was put into a carriage in which were two men, having the appearance of farmers, and we had not proceeded far before it was apparent from his conduct, that one was insane; and the other informed us he was his keeper!

On arriving at Paddington, I pointed this out to the officer who takes the tickets, that there might be no opportunity left for denying the fact, which could be further proved by a gentleman of Hereford, who was a passenger in the same carriage.

I also pointed out to the same officer, the state of the carriage, which let the rain in so fast at the roof, as to have formed a large pool on each of the seats, and run down on the floor.

—I am, Sir, &c.,

A FREQUENT TRAVELLER
ON THE GREAT WESTERN.

Sept. 23, 1847.

Miscellaneous.

PIRACY OF GRANITE PAPER PATTERN.—Mr. Spurway, a house decorator in Bishopsgate-street, was charged on Saturday before last, at Guildhall, with having sold, on 27th ult., a piece of splashed granite paper-hanging, being a fraudulent imitation of a new and original design, registered on 20th November, 1846, by Mr. William Gibbs, of 149, St. Mary-axe, a manufacturer of paper-hanging. After the Copyright of Designs Act, 6 Vict. c. 100, had been referred to, and a number of witnesses examined on the question of originality and novelty, a witness of the defendant, the designer of the imitation itself in fact, settled his master's case for him, by admitting, while being put to the torture in cross-examination, that he had just called in upon Mr. Spurway, and asked him if he had seen the new style of granite? and said he could produce something which would work the same, but be different in fact; and he sketched out in 10 minutes a representation of part of a five sided, instead of a six-sided figure, which Mr. Gibbs's was. Mr. Alderman Wood said his colleague agreed with him that a fraudulent imitation of the registered design had been sold, and they fined the defendant 5*l.* and 3*l.* costs. Mr. Alderman Sidney nevertheless intimated that he had his misgivings of the newness of the pattern imitated, but it had not been shown to be old.

ACCIDENT TO A RAILWAY ROOF.—We learn from the *Manchester Examiner*, that at the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Company's end of the Victoria Station, an engine getting off the rails, on Saturday last, and coming into collision with the last of the cast-iron pillars which support the wrought-iron roof, snapped it in two, bringing down immediately that portion of the roofing which it directly supported, and causing the two pillars next to it (the space between each pillar being about eight yards) to break also, bringing down a still further considerable part of the roof, producing a very loud report as each pillar fell, and presenting—with the fallen materials and the iron and glass-work which hung midway between the top of the roof and the ground, threatening to come down every moment—a scene of ruin and desolation to the passengers who came in by the train a short time after the accident occurred. A number of men were instantly set to work to pull down the materials of the roof, as far as they appeared to be in danger of falling, which they accomplished and wholly cleared in the course of the evening. The outer compartment of the roof was propped up for the space of sixteen yards, but the extent of roofing which fell or was obliged to be taken down, was about twenty-five yards in length, and at least twenty yards wide. The amount of damage is roughly estimated at from 400*l.* to 500*l.*

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION has been formally invited by the council of Worcester to hold their next annual congress there.

PROJECTED WORKS, &c.—Tenders have been called for by advertisement for the erection of a chapel at Edwinstowe; and of a town hall at Yeovil; the excavation, building, and completing of part of the line of conduit to the Leeds water-works, being a length of two miles, together with waste weir and other works; the building of sewers for the commissioners of the Holborn and Finsbury divisions; the construction of 73 miles of the Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Stour Valley Railway and branch to Dudley; and of 3 miles 11 chains, 2 miles 5 chains, and 7 miles 29 chains of extensions and alterations of the Midland line, and the erection of a station at Mansfield; also for painting and repairing the Brighton terminus of the London and South coast line, including offices, sheds, master's house, &c., and for the erection of a station at Cook's Bridge, near Lewes, on the Keymer branch.

FALL OF LANERCOST ABBEY CHURCH ROOF.—We regret to state, says a contemporary, that a very considerable portion of the roofing of this venerable structure has at length fallen in. On Tuesday, the 4th inst., in the night, and owing to the decayed state of the rafters which supported the roofing at the east end of the chancel, many yards gave way, and bursting through the ceiling, destroyed in its descent everything with which it came into contact. Judging from the dilapidated condition of the whole, the present fall is only the prelude to a greater, and it will be necessary that the edifice should be entirely re-roofed before it can again with safety be used for the purposes of divine worship. How is this point to be accomplished? The inhabitants of the parish will not easily be persuaded to undertake at their own expense so serious a task. Her Majesty's Commissioners of Woods and Forests have long held out hopes that they would lend assistance towards beautifying and repairing generally the abbey, but years have rolled away, and the matter appears to remain *in statu quo*. We trust, however, that in an age when, happily, the spirit is abroad for building and adorning churches, something may yet be done towards rescuing this noble and time-battered structure from the very disgraceful condition in which it has hitherto been suffered to remain.

ERECTION OF LUNATIC ASYLUMS.—In the last *Gazette* there are proclamations ordering lunatic asylums to be erected. 1. Near Mullingar, to contain 300 lunatic poor, and to be called the Mullingar District Lunatic Asylum. 2. Near Dublin, in addition to the existing Richmond Lunatic Asylum, to contain 300 lunatic poor. 3. Near Omagh, to contain 300 lunatic poor, and to be called the Omagh District Lunatic Asylum. In an official circular sent to the magistrates in those English counties that are about to build lunatic asylums under the new Act, very strict regulations are laid down as to the situation and construction of the buildings. Plans for the proposed Pauper Lunatic Asylum for Middlesex, to be erected at Colney Hatch, are occupying a large number of architects. The building is required to accommodate 1,000 patients, and this makes it a work of difficulty as well as magnitude. The designs are to be sent in on the 1st of October. An exhibition of them, which it is to be hoped will take place, will present an interesting study, and will probably influence the construction and arrangement of all those that are afterwards to be erected.

IMPROVEMENT OF MECHANICS' INSTITUTIONS.—The recent abandonment of more than one of the metropolitan institutions, has, of course, given rise to various remarks and suggestions. A writer in the *Athenaeum* urges, that habits of thought and observation on the part of the members have not been cultivated. "Popular lectures and light literature give a certain amount of information in an easy and pleasant way; and, as the mind is seldom tried with a difficulty under this system, the habit of labouring after knowledge is lost. By acquiring knowledge easily, and by picking up a certain amount of conversational material at a cheap rate, habits of indolence—or at least of impatience—have been generated; and the great besetting sin of the present age is the result." He suggests the following plan as a remedy for this:—"Let the members of each institution organize themselves into classes, for pursuing some special branches of inquiry